

**2019 ADA
Participation Group
Forum Meeting
Dates**



Please join us for the ADA Participation Group Forum! Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month, 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The next ADA forum is:

- * January 9, 2019
- * March 13, 2019
- * May 8, 2019
- * July 10, 2019
- * September 11, 2019
- * November 13, 2019

(Changes in schedule and/or meeting place are possible. However, notices will be posted in advance.)

**ADA Forum Meetings
are held at:**

**Greater Hartford
Transit District**

One Union Place
Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: (860) 247-5329
Fax: (860) 549-3879
www.hartfordtransit.org



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT

Did you know that if you have a question, compliment and/or concern about your ADA Paratransit trip we would like to hear from you?

Who do I contact? You may contact the Customer Service Department by calling (860) 724-5340 extension 9, Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (For the hearing impaired, please dial Relay of Connecticut at 1-800-833-8134.) You may also contact Customer Service by sending an email to Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com, fax (860) 936-3750 or write:

**Customer Service Department c/o First Transit
148 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT 06108**

How soon should I call? Please contact the Customer Service Department as soon as possible when you wish to report an incident (ideally within 48 hours of the incident).

What information will I need to provide? Please be certain to have the day of the week, date, location, and time of all incidents that you would like to report. Any additional details you can provide will be helpful.

When will I receive a response? Any communication with the Customer Service Department will be addressed in a timely manner.

ADA RIDER TIP: Passengers may cancel trips afterhours from midnight to 4:30 a.m. by calling (860) 724-5340 and selecting "0".

**To obtain a copy of this
newsletter in an accessible format
please contact us at:
(860) 247-5329
extension 3011**



CONTACT US AT: (860) 724-5340

- Reserve/Cancel/Confirm.....Select 1**
- Dispatch Department.....Select 2**
- ADA Application Request.....Select 4**
- SpanishSelect 5**
- Subscription Service.....Select 6**
- Service UpdatesSelect 8**
- Customer Service Select 9**



**DISABILITY RIGHTS
ARE CIVIL RIGHTS**

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THE S.T.A.R.

(Safe, Timely, Accessible, Reliable)

ADA Paratransit Newsletter

Winter 2019



ARE YOU READY FOR WINTER WEATHER?



**Greater Hartford Transit District's
ADA Paratransit buses in the snow.**

Winter is here! This is the time of year when the Greater Hartford Transit District (the "District") reviews our emergency procedures so that we can do our best to keep the ADA paratransit service running during severe weather, and if there is an interruption, to resume service as soon as possible following a storm. Severe weather can sometimes cause cancellations and/or delays. Part of our preparation includes informing our passengers where to find notifications about service cancellations or changes during winter weather. In the event of a winter storm warning or other severe weather, we will post updates in several places to keep you informed about potential ADA paratransit service changes. You can check in regularly **on our website at www.hartfordtransit.org, tune in to CRIS radio, WTIC 1080 AM radio, or watch WFSB Channel 3 television** for information regarding cancellations, delays, or changes to your paratransit trip.

As always, the District's highest priority is the safety of our passengers and to provide you with the best service possible. We make every effort to continue the ADA paratransit service as usual in severe weather, but information will be readily available to you in the event of potential cancellations or delays. Stay in touch with us when you are planning your trips during winter weather events. It is strongly recommended for ADA passengers to reschedule non-essential trips during severe weather. However, if you have any questions or concerns about travelling on ADA paratransit during severe winter weather, you may contact the Customer Service Department at (860) 724-5340 extension 9, send us an email at Hartford.Customerservice@firstgroup.com or fax (860) 955-2915. You may also write:

**Customer Service Department c/o First Transit
148 Roberts Street
East Hartford, CT 06108**



**Easterseals
100th Anniversary**

Easterseals celebrates its 100th anniversary in April 2019! Easterseals continues their legacy as a leading disability advocate and service provider, and are driven to achieve their vision of a world that embraces and values people with disabilities.

Easterseals is proud to offer a variety of life-changing programs at their 72 locations that help children and adults with disabilities to live, learn, work and play, and act in their communities.

To find Easterseals programs and services in your area, please visit easterseals.com/connect-locally.

For news about Easterseals in your area sign up for their free newsletter at easterseals.com/subscribe.

ADA RECERTIFICATION

IS IT TIME FOR YOURS?

Why does my ADA paratransit need to be recertified? The FTA ADA Circular states that “The entity may require recertification of the eligibility of ADA paratransit eligible individuals at reasonable intervals” (§ 37.125(f)). Many factors might change over time that could affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to use the fixed route transit service. These could include changes in the physical environment, changes in the accessibility of the fixed route system, or changes in riders’ functional abilities.

How often do ADA recertifications occur? The District recertifies all existing paratransit riders every 3 to 5 years in order to determine their passengers’ current abilities and conditions and to update their personal information.

How do I know when my ADA paratransit will need to be recertified? Your ADA eligibility expiration date is located on the ADA certification letter and ID card. In addition, the District will automatically mail an ADA recertification application to you via postal mail before your paratransit eligibility expires. Please note that certification for ADA paratransit does not guarantee future approval.

My disability has gotten worse but I am not due for a recertification. Can I request to reapply early? Yes, regardless of the recertification policy, ADA-eligible individuals have the right to reapply at any time. This right to reapply extends to anyone, including those denied eligibility.

If my disability gets better should I inform the District? Yes, if your condition improves and there is a change in your ability to use the fixed route bus, it is your responsibility to notify the District immediately. Similarly, if a change in mobility aides (such as obtaining a power wheelchair when you previously used a manual wheelchair) enables you to overcome a previous inability to get to and from transit bus stops, you should contact the District for ADA recertification.

Will I require another ADA interview to be recertified? In most cases, passengers previously interviewed and certified for ADA paratransit will not need another face-to-face assessment. If the ADA assessor has follow up questions, in most cases you will be contacted by telephone. If, however, another interview is deemed necessary, you will be contacted promptly by the District.

Does my doctor need to sign the ADA recertification application? No, your doctor’s signature is not required to complete your ADA recertification. However, you will be requested to provide the name and address of your current doctor or health care professional in case additional information is needed from him/her.

Where can I get more information about ADA recertifications? You may contact us at (860) 247-5329 extension 3086 and a staff person will assist you with answering questions and/or concerns about your ADA recertification. You may also inquire about your ADA recertification by writing to Greater Hartford Transit District, One Union Place, Hartford, CT 06105.

WINTER WEATHER

ADA PARATRANSIT PASSENGER TIPS

To ensure that the District and First Transit continue to provide our passengers with safe and reliable service this winter, please be sure that any entrance pathways such as sidewalks, driveways, ramps, and steps leading up to your place of residence are free of snow and ice. Failure to comply with this request might result in our drivers not being able to provide transportation for you until it is safe to do so.

Prefer to ride out the storm at home? To cancel your ADA trip, please call (860) 724-5340 extension 2 at least two (2) hours prior to the beginning of your pickup window. It is helpful if you contact our office as soon as you know that you will not need your paratransit trip. Please also notify us if you have any changes associated with the details of an ADA trip you will be taking.

Safety Tips for People with Disabilities:

Winter weather can present safety hazards for everyone, but especially for people with disabilities. Subzero temperatures, inches (or feet) of snow, and windy conditions can lead to accidents, injury, and/or illness. Freezing temperatures and inaccessible walkways are two of the most common obstacles, but there are many other challenges that require careful planning and consideration. Here are a few tips from www.ready.gov and <http://www.eastersealstech.com/2018/01/24/tips-and-tools-for-tackling-the-winter-weather/> that will help you to prepare and stay safe in winter weather:

- * Strongly consider staying indoors during a winter storm. Prolonged exposure to cold can cause hypothermia.
- * Walk carefully on icy sidewalks and roads. Major injuries and accidents are caused by slippery conditions.
- * If you lose feeling and color in your extremities, cover the exposed area, avoid rubbing your skin, and seek medical help immediately. You may have frostbite.
- * Stay dry. Wet clothes make you lose body heat, increasing your risk of hypothermia.
- * Consider your wardrobe. When preparing your winter wardrobe, be sure to include:
 - ◇ A warm coat with a good hood. Hoods are easier to flip on and off than hats. Be sure your coat is suitable for harsh winter conditions.
 - ◇ Snow boots with good tread and insulation to keep your feet warm and to prevent slipping. You might also invest in a good pair of cleats that you can attach to boots to prevent slipping on ice.
 - ◇ Gloves to protect your hands. Find warm gloves with thinner material at the fingertips. They are handy for those who cannot see well and need a sense of touch to find surfaces such as keyholes, door handles, the buckle for your service dog’s harness, etc.
- * Have an emergency kit with you in case of unexpected delays. Some items to have on hand include a protein bar or other snack, bottled water, hand warmers, and kitty litter to use for traction for wheelchair users.
- * Make sure your service animal is ready, too. Service animals need to be prepared for winter weather conditions to ensure their safety and comfort. It is a good idea for individuals with service animals to avoid driveways, roads, and sidewalks where salt has been used to melt ice, as this is one of the biggest threats to healthy paw pads. A paw wax such as “Musher’s Secret” should be applied before going on walks to form a protective barrier between the paw and pavement.



**Pepe’s Pointers
for Winter**

Señor Pepe will be using ADA paratransit to visit his family in New Haven, CT this Holiday Season!

Pepe says, *Even if the District’s ADA Paratransit service has not been cancelled or delayed due to severe weather, if you have a trip connection with another transit agency, there might be changes to their service. You can check for information regarding other transit agency service connections by calling:*

Greater Bridgeport Transit:
203-579-7777

North East Transportation:
(Waterbury) 203-756-5550
(Meriden) 1-800-441-8901
(Wallingford) 1-800-704-3114

Middletown Area Transit:
860-347-3313

Greater New Haven Transit:
203-288-6643

**Best Wishes for a
Happy Holiday Season!**

Señor Pepe